

which the individual had reasonable cause to believe was connected with the administration of benefits under part B of title IV of the Act) with respect to the interpretation of a pertinent provision of the Act or regulations pertaining thereto, such individual, in accepting such overpayment, will be deemed to be *without fault*.

[37 FR 20649, Sept. 30, 1972]

§ 410.561g When an individual is at “fault” in a reduction-overpayment.

(a) *Degree of care.* An individual will not be *without fault* if the Administration has evidence in its possession which shows either a lack of good faith or failure to exercise a high degree of care in determining whether circumstances which may cause reductions from his benefits should be brought to the attention of the Administration by an immediate report or by return of a benefit check. The high degree of care expected of an individual may vary with the complexity of the circumstances giving rise to the overpayment and the capacity of the particular payee to realize that he is being overpaid. Accordingly, variances in the personal circumstances and situations of individual payees are to be considered in determining whether the necessary degree of care has been exercised by an individual to warrant a finding that he was without fault in accepting a “reduction-overpayment.”

(b) *Subsequent reduction-overpayments.* An individual will not be without fault where, after having been exonerated for a “reduction-overpayment” and after having been advised of the correct interpretation of the reduction provision, he incurs another “reduction-overpayment” under the same circumstances as the first overpayment.

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§ 410.561h When adjustment or recovery of an overpayment will be waived.

(a) *Adjustment or recovery deemed “against equity and good conscience.”* In the situations described in §§ 410.561e (a), (b), and (c), and 410.561f, adjustment or recovery will be waived since it will be deemed such adjustment or

recovery is “against equity and good conscience.” Adjustment or recovery will also be deemed “against equity and good conscience” in the situation described in § 410.561e(d), but only as to a month in which the individual’s earnings from wages do not exceed the total monthly benefits affected for that month.

(b) *Adjustment or recovery considered to “defeat the purpose of title IV” or be “against equity and good conscience” under certain circumstances.* In the situation described in § 410.561e(d) (except in the case of an individual whose monthly earnings from wages in employment do not exceed the total monthly benefits affected for a particular month), and in the situations described in § 410.561e (e) through (k), adjustment or recovery shall be waived only where the evidence establishes that adjustment or recovery would work a financial hardship (see § 410.561c) or would otherwise be inequitable (see § 410.561d).

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§ 410.563 Liability of a certifying officer.

No certifying or disbursing officer shall be held liable for any amount certified or paid by him to any individual:

(a) Where adjustment or recovery of such amount is waived under section 204(b) of the Social Security Act; or

(b) Where adjustment under section 204(a) of the Social Security Act is not completed prior to the death of all individuals against whose benefits or lump sums reductions are authorized; or

(c) Where a claim for recovery of an overpayment is compromised or collection or adjustment action is suspended or terminated pursuant to the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966 (31 U.S.C. 951–953) (see § 410.565).

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§ 410.565 Collection and compromise of claims for overpayment.

(a) *General effect of the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966.* Claims by the Administration against an individual for recovery of overpayments under part B

of title IV of the Act, not exceeding the sum of \$20,000, exclusive of interest, may be compromised, or collection suspended or terminated where such individual or his estate does not have the present or prospective ability to pay the full amount of the claim within a reasonable time (see paragraph (c) of this section) or the cost of collection is likely to exceed the amount of recovery (see paragraph (d) of this section) except as provided under paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *When there will be no compromise, suspension or termination of collection of a claim for overpayment*—(1) *Overpaid individual alive*. In any case where the overpaid individual is alive, a claim for overpayment will not be compromised, nor will there be suspension or termination of collection of the claim by the Administration if there is an indication of fraud, the filing of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of such individual or on the part of any other party having an interest in the claim.

(2) *Overpaid individual deceased*. In any case where the overpaid individual is deceased (i) a claim for overpayment in excess of \$5,000 will not be compromised, nor will there be suspension or termination of collection of the claim by the Administration if there is an indication of fraud: The filing of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of such deceased individual, and (ii) a claim for overpayment regardless of the amount will not be compromised, nor will there be suspension or termination of collection of the claim by the Administration if there is an indication that any person other than the deceased overpaid individual had a part in the fraudulent action which resulted in the overpayment.

(c) *Inability to pay claim for recovery of overpayment*. In determining whether the overpaid individual is unable to pay a claim for recovery of an overpayment under part B of title IV of the Act, the Administration will consider such individual's age, health, present and potential income (including inheritance prospects), assets (e.g., real property, savings account), possible concealment or improper transfer of assets, and assets or income of such in-

dividual which may be available in enforced collection proceedings. The Administration will also consider exemptions available to such individual under the pertinent State or Federal law in such proceedings. In the event the overpaid individual is deceased, the Administration will consider the available assets of the estate, taking into account any liens or superior claims against the estate.

(d) *Cost of collection or litigative probabilities*. Where the probable costs of recovering an overpayment under part B of title IV of the Act would not justify enforced collection proceedings for the full amount of the claim or there is doubt concerning the Administration's ability to establish its claim as well as the time which it will take to effect such collection, a compromise or settlement for less than the full amount will be considered.

(e) *Amount of compromise*. The amount to be accepted in compromise of a claim for overpayment under part B of title IV of the Act shall bear a reasonable relationship to the amount which can be recovered by enforced collection proceedings giving due consideration to the exemptions available to the overpaid individual under State or Federal law and the time which such collection will take.

(f) *Payment*. Payment of the amount which the Administration has agreed to accept as a compromise in full settlement of a claim for recovery of an overpayment under part B of title IV of the Act must be made within the time and in the manner set by the Administration. A claim for such recovery of the overpayment shall not be considered compromised or settled until the full payment of the compromised amount has been made within the time and manner set by the Administration. Failure of the overpaid individual or his estate to make such payment as provided shall result in reinstatement of the full amount of the overpayment less any amounts paid prior to such default.

§ 410.570 Underpayments.

(a) *General*. As used in this subpart, the term *underpayment* includes a payment in an amount less than the